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Evaluation standards recommended by the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL)

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Evaluation Standards

Recommended by the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL)

by

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Translation: Sandy Taut

INTRODUCTION

Purposes of the Evaluation Standards

The following evaluation standards, recommended by the Swiss Evaluation Society (SEVAL Standards), aim to contribute to the professionalization of evaluation in Switzerland. Endorsement of these standards improves credibility, quality, and trust in evaluation. Only the positive collaboration of all stakeholders, i.e., evaluators, clients, and other persons involved in the evaluation, can result in evaluations of high quality. Therefore, the SEVAL standards comprise criteria that should be advocated by all stakeholders.

The SEVAL standards define evaluation objectives. Ideally, an evaluation meets all of these. However, it will not be possible in every single case to take into account each standard to an equal degree. Rather, the SEVAL standards should be adapted with regard to the specific situation. That is, some standards might sometimes be deemed insignificant, while others are attributed an especially high importance. Adjustment to specific conditions should be dealt with in a rational, open way and should be clearly explained. The adaptations should be negotiated and agreed upon by all stakeholders (clients, evaluators, beneficiaries, and others) at the onset of an evaluation.

During the design phase of the SEVAL standards, special care was taken to make them suitable for all kinds of evaluations (excluding personnel evaluations). Consequently, users have to focus the standards according to their individual needs, not only as part of the above-mentioned adaptation process, but also by specifying certain statements contained in the SEVAL standards. This interpretation process should take place in a transparent, comprehensive manner. Thus, even outsiders become empowered to understand every individualized version of the SEVAL standards.

Applicability of the SEVAL Standards

The SEVAL standards can be applied to all evaluations (excluding personnel evaluations) regardless of institutional context, overall approach (e.g., internal or external evaluation), or applied field. In the SEVAL standards, the term "evaluand" is used for programs, projects,

measures, organisations, institutions, policies, products, materials, and other evaluation objects, but excluding persons.

Intended Users of the SEVAL Standards

The SEVAL standards address all persons holding a stake in an evaluation; namely, evaluators, clients, and other persons in a position to support compliance with the SEVAL standards (e.g., those involved in teaching and training evaluation).

Development of the SEVAL Standards

The SEVAL standards are based on *The Program Evaluation Standards* developed by the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994, 1999). The SEVAL working group "Evaluation Standards" has closely investigated the topic. This working group, comprised of federal and state representatives as well as field- and research-focused professional evaluators, appointed a committee whose members developed this set of standards with the consent of the members of the working group. The following document contains more detailed procedural suggestions as well as a list of persons involved in the development process.

Overview of the SEVAL Standards

The SEVAL standards are divided into four groups, each addressing one of the following themes: utility, feasibility, propriety, and accuracy. Each of these four attributes will be described in an introductory sentence. The specific standards categorized under each dimension are listed, including a title and a one-sentence description. The standards are then elaborated to further explicate their meaning.

The individual standards, similar to the four major attributes, are not put in a particular order. The SEVAL standards therefore do not stress any standard or group of standards over another. This approach was chosen because the significance of each standard as well as each dimension differs from evaluation to evaluation.

Following the standards, the reader may find a number of supplementary materials:

- An overview (so-called "functional table") where the standards are listed according to their importance for certain steps in the evaluation process. This table allows the user to easily find those standards especially relevant in a specific situation.
- An elaboration of the procedure used to derive the SEVAL standards from *The Program Evaluation Standards* (Joint Committee, 1994, 1999), which includes justifications for the adaptations made

- A list of the members of the SEVAL working group "Evaluation Standards"
- A bibliography

THE EVALUATION STANDARDS

Utility

The Utility standards emphasize that an evaluation is guided by the information needs of its users.

U1 Stakeholder Identification

Persons involved and affected by the evaluation are identified so that their interests and needs can be addressed.

Persons who should be consulted in the context of an evaluation include the following:

- Those who decide upon the future of the evaluand (often the donor)
- Those who are responsible for the planning and design of the evaluand
- Those who are involved in the implementation of the evaluand
- Those who should or will be directly or indirectly affected by the evaluand (target groups and their social contexts)
- Other groups with an interest in the evaluation findings (e.g., decision makers who plan similar projects, evaluators, and the public).

These persons, groups, and institutions are referred to as "stakeholders."

U2 Evaluator Credibility

Those conducting an evaluation are both trustworthy and competent so that the evaluation findings achieve maximum credibility and acceptance.

The credibility of the evaluators strongly influences the feasibility and effectiveness of the evaluation. To be found trustworthy by different stakeholder groups, the following characteristics are crucial: professional competence, integrity, independence, as well as social and communication skills.

U3 Information Scope and Selection

The scope and selection of the collected information make it possible to answer relevant questions about the evaluand and, at the same time, to take into account the interests and needs of clients and other stakeholders.

When planning an evaluation it must be considered which information is essential for answering the key evaluation questions and which is desirable but insignificant. Available resources should be allocated according to the relevance of the evaluation questions to be answered and the demands by the most important stakeholder groups.

U4 Transparency of Assessment

The perspectives and rationale used to interpret the findings are described in a way to clarify the bases for value judgments.

The interpretation of information and results constitutes one of the most important and critical steps in the evaluation process. The interpretation is based on theoretical models and values. In order to make the evaluators' judgments convincing, comprehensible, and evaluable, it is necessary to explicitly state these value bases.

U5 Report Comprehensiveness and Clarity

Evaluation reports describe the evaluand including its context and the purposes, questions, procedures, and findings of the evaluation, so that essential information is provided and easily understood.

To be able to communicate evaluation findings in a convincing manner, the evaluation report (or any other reporting procedure) must be complete and clear. The report should portray precise language (e.g., clear definitions of the most important terms and consistent use of terminology), and it should be comprehensible by the intended audience. A summary of major findings in the form of a table or a graph fosters understanding. Ideally, reporting procedures and layout should be planned so that optimal reception by the target audience results. For some audiences, a detailed final report is inadequate for communicating evaluation findings. Depending on the target group and the particular situation, more attention can be attracted by presentations, workshops, or similar reporting procedures.

U6 Report Timeliness

Significant interim findings and final reports are brought to the attention of intended users, so that they can be used in a timely fashion.

An evaluation loses most of its effect if its time line does not correspond with the audience's decision-making process. It should be noted that in many cases the report needs to be submitted considerably in advance (e.g., to public service agencies) because of internal processing before decisions can be reached. Furthermore, in many evaluation it is sensible to share interim findings with the client, especially when these results should have an impact on the client's future actions. These feedback loops are to be considered during the planning stage of the evaluation so that appropriate resources can be allocated.

U7 Evaluation Impact

Evaluations are planned, conducted, and reported in ways that encourage stakeholders to observe the evaluation process and to use evaluation findings.

Whether or not evaluation findings and recommendations are used depends largely upon the expectations of stakeholders regarding their utility. An important prerequisite to promoting positive expectations and to be able to actually meet them is the involvement of stakeholders in the evaluation process. In addition, it has a favorable effect if continuous and clear feedback is given throughout the course of the evaluation.

Feasibility

The Feasibility standards ensure that an evaluation is carried out in a realistic, thoughtful, diplomatic, and cost-effective manner.

F1 Practical Procedures

Evaluation methods are chosen to collect necessary information while keeping disruption of the evaluand or the evaluation to a minimum.

When planning and implementing an evaluation it is important to use the most appropriate research methods. Equally important is to ensure that the methods and instruments are practical. Neither the evaluand nor the persons affected by the data collection should be unnecessarily burdened. In an evaluation context the most valid research methods often cannot not be applied because they take too much time and effort or they are ethically unacceptable. It is crucial to

discuss with stakeholders the advantages and disadvantages as well as the analytical power of the chosen methods during the planning process.

F2 Political Viability

The evaluation is planned and conducted by taking into account the different positions of various interest groups, so that their cooperation can be obtained and so that possible attempts by any of these groups to curtail evaluation activities or to bias or misapply the results can be averted.

To avoid negative reactions to the evaluation, it is necessary to identify all groups of persons with an interest in the evaluation. Besides the participants, these may include persons not closely connected with the evaluand (e.g., persons who offer a competitive product). If expectations/needs of the different interest groups are identified and taken into account, negative reactions will be of a more predictable nature or will not manifest themselves at all. Besides the obvious interests of these groups, so-called "hidden agendas" can gain importance. Considerations about the explicit and implicit needs of different actors should also include the client's perspective.

F3 Cost Effectiveness

Evaluations produce information of sufficient value so that the resources expended can be justified.

An evaluation is cost-effective if its expected benefit is equal or greater than its costs. Costs encompass all necessary resources. They include time spent on supervising the evaluation and financial costs covered by other institutions. Costs therefore comprise the sum of social and monetary resources spent on carrying out the evaluation ("full cost"). The benefit covers the value added by the evaluation (improved effectiveness, budgetary savings, knowledge about a program's level of acceptance, etc.). The cost-benefit ratio of an evaluation should be optimal. For example, out of a number of evaluation designs, the evaluator should choose the one requiring the least effort. Regarding designs of the same cost, the design with the greatest benefit should be selected. If in all cases considered the costs remain greater than the expected benefit, the evaluation should not be conducted.

Propriety

The Propriety standards ensure that an evaluation is conducted legally, ethically, and with due regard for the welfare of those involved and affected.

P1 Formal Agreement

Obligations of the formal parties to an evaluation (what is to be done, how, by whom, when) is agreed to in writing, so that these parties are obligated to adhere to all conditions of the agreement or to renegotiate it.

At the beginning of an evaluation, the relations between client and evaluator are usually characterized by mutual respect and trust. This is an optimal basis to establish all rules and obligations of both parties in form of a written agreement (e.g., a contract). Such a formal written agreement should at least regulate budget, time, personnel, report, contents, design, and methodology. In particular, the rights and obligations of those involved should be determined as precisely as possible. If, during the course of time, adaptations become necessary, the conditions of the collaboration can be renegotiated. A formal written contract reduces the likelihood of misunderstandings among the partners and, in case they do nevertheless occur, facilitates their elucidation.

P2 Protection of Individual Rights

Evaluations are designed and conducted in a way to respect and protect the rights and welfare of human beings.

Human beings possess individual rights that are based on laws and accepted ethical practice, common sense and courtesy. When planning and conducting an evaluation, the rights and welfare of individuals must not be jeopardized. Persons involved in an evaluation should be informed thereof. The predictable consequences of the evaluation have to be discussed in detail. The client should refrain from prompting the evaluator to disregard the above-mentioned principles. If an evaluation leads to well-founded conclusions posing a threat to the welfare of individuals, it needs to be considered carefully to what extent the distribution of these findings is justified.

P3 Human Interactions

Evaluations are conceptualized in such a way that interactions between the persons involved are characterized by mutual respect.

Evaluators should not impair the dignity and self-respect of persons they come in contact with during the evaluation process. By displaying appropriate behavior, hostility toward the evaluation can be avoided. This is not only a matter of human dignity but also relates to practical considerations. Persons whose dignity and self-respect are threatened not only fall short of their creative potential; they also show behavior limiting the range of evaluation activities. Therefore, it is necessary to study the cultural and social backgrounds of all those involved as well as to understand and consider the significance of specific individuals associated with the evaluation.

P4 Complete and Fair Assessment

Evaluations are complete and fair in their examination and recording of strengths and weaknesses of the evaluand, so that strengths can be built upon and problem areas addressed.

A balanced discussion of strengths and weaknesses of the evaluand aims at its complete and fair assessment. Even if the purpose of an evaluation is often to analyze weaknesses, positive aspects should be sought and reported. As a matter of fact, it is often possible to correct weaknesses by building upon existing strengths. In addition, it needs to be considered that correcting shortcomings can lead to weakening the existing strengths. Therefore, it is useful to ask external persons (with a possibly divergent view on positive and negative results) to review the report before its final submission. If, for whatever reason (e.g., because of time or budgetary constraints), it is impossible to collect certain data, these omissions should be explicitly pointed out. Clients should refrain from impeding complete and fair reporting by the evaluator.

P5 Disclosure of Findings

The formal parties to an evaluation ensure that the full set of evaluation findings is made accessible to the persons affected by the evaluation, and any others with expressed legal rights to receive the results.

All those involved or affected by the evaluation should have access to the evaluation report. Since the number of stakeholders is often very large, in many cases the report has to be made publicly accessible. Primary participants (i.e., clients, evaluators, but also other persons) are responsible for adhering to these demands. In addition, the report should be written in such a way as to meet the needs of the audience. For example, adequately communicating about an evaluation might warrant an executive summary of an extensive report and an annex including all methodological details.

P6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

Conflict of interest is dealt with openly and honestly, so that it harms the evaluation processes and results as little as possible.

There are a multitude of situations in which evaluators are confronted with conflicts of interest, partially because they have their own interests that could influence evaluation findings. For example, evaluators are more or less dependent on receiving future requests from clients; they have specific philosophical, theoretical, methodological, and political beliefs; and they are part of a personal and organizational network. Conflicts between certain involved interest groups can surface during an evaluation. This can result in biased evaluation processes, results, and interpretations. Conflicts of interest should generally be avoided. Because of the just-mentioned multitude of possible conflicts of interest, this is often impossible, however. In these cases, the task is to address these conflicts in a way that does not harm the evaluation.

Accuracy

The Accuracy standards ensure that an evaluation produces and discloses valid and useful information.

A1 Program Documentation

The evaluand is described and documented clearly and accurately, so that it can be clearly identified.

The evaluand, whether it is a measure, a program, or an organization, has to be investigated carefully. It is important to take into account that the evaluand can manifest itself differently depending on time and surrounding environment. The description of the evaluand should clearly state the investigative scope. This will allow the audience to make comparisons with other evaluands. In addition, a precise investigation helps achieve an understanding of causes and effects as well as unintended outcomes. It is especially crucial to note differences between the planned and the actual implementation of the evaluand.

A2 Context Analysis

The influence the context has on the evaluand needs to be identified.

The evaluation context is defined as the combination of all conditions surrounding the evaluand—for example, the institutional affiliation, social and political climate, characteristics of those involved and affected by the evaluation, structure of political life, neighboring or

competitive public and private activities, or economic conditions. These and other contextual factors are to be examined in enough detail to ensure that the evaluation will be planned, conducted, and reported on accordingly. The contextual knowledge is necessary to design a realistic evaluation and to make it responsive to the existing conditions. Contextual factors often have considerable impact on evaluation outcomes. A well-founded context analysis also allows the evaluator to assess the generalizability of evaluation findings. The context should not be defined too narrowly. On the other hand, the context analysis should not be too detailed to avoid taking much needed resources away from the analysis of the evaluand.

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

Purposes, questions, and procedures of an evaluation are documented and described in enough detail, so that they can be identified and assessed.

The purposes of an evaluation, the questions which it is supposed to answer, and the chosen approach need to be documented carefully during the course of the evaluation and should be clearly communicated in reports to the audience. This standard aims at making the evaluation process transparent. When describing the purposes and questions, it is especially important to take into account divergent points of view. The documentation and description of the evaluation process should include a detailed account of management, data collection, data analysis, interpretation, and reporting procedures. It is important to consider changes that may result in incoherence between intended and actual implementation. It needs to be pointed out which discrepancies occurred and why. These, as well as the procedures in general, are to be explicated clearly. Failure to do so can immunize the evaluation against justified criticism. At the same time, it can also encourage unwarranted condemnation.

A4 Defensible Information Sources

The evaluation uses information sources that are described in enough detail, so that the adequacy of the information can be assessed.

The description of the information sources allows stakeholders to assess the quality of the data collected from these sources. Sources include individuals or groups, documents, audiovisual material, statistical data, etc. The use of different sources makes a comparison of information possible. The credibility of an evaluation can be challenged by a missing or insufficient description of the information sources. Besides a description of the sources, the data gained from them should also be assessed. The trustworthiness of the information should be taken into consideration when interpreting the evaluation results.

A5 Valid and Reliable Information

The data collection procedures are chosen or developed and then applied in such a way that validity and reliability of the interpretations are ensured.

To a certain extent, an empirical investigation is always subject to errors. Validity and reliability specify two indicators of sound data collection. These qualities can only be assessed in the specific evaluation context, considering the particular purpose of the data collection. Validity is defined by the extent to which methodologies and instruments really measure what they are meant to measure. A data collection method is more reliable the more consistently it measures (concerning different points of measurement with different instruments and among different people). Validity and reliability are closely linked. When assessing and choosing data collection instruments, both aspects need to be equally reflected.

A6 Systematic Review of Data

The data collected, analyzed, and presented in the course of an evaluation are systematically examined for possible errors.

During data collection, recording, analysis, and interpretation, numerous possibilities exist to make errors. These range from insignificant errors during data entry to false interpretations. Therefore, it is crucial to avoid potential sources of errors during the evaluation process. In addition, the collected data need to be examined regarding possible errors by making use of appropriate methods, e.g., plausibility checks, parallel recording, communicative validation, etc. Possible errors and their consequences have to be addressed in the evaluation report. If errors persist, false interpretations and conclusions can result. In addition, inaccurate data can discredit evaluation in general.

A7 Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

Qualitative and quantitative data are analyzed in an appropriate, systematic way, so that the evaluation questions can be effectively answered.

In an evaluation conclusions are drawn based on qualitative and quantitative data analysis. Data analysis should take place in a systematic manner by following rules of methodological soundness. It often proves sensible and useful to include both qualitative and quantitative information in an evaluation. The choice of information and methods of analysis is based on the nature of the evaluation questions and data availability. During the selection process, other factors like knowledge or preferences of persons involved should not play a role. The choices made and their consequences should be critically reconsidered. Strengths and limitations of the methods used should be explicitly stated.

A8 Justified Conclusions

The conclusions drawn in the evaluation are explicitly justified, so that stakeholders can comprehend and assess them.

The conclusions arrived at in an evaluation must be explicated and, together with the underlying assumptions and methods used, made transparent to those involved. The scope of the conclusions should also be clarified. Likewise, the report should include a discussion of alternative interpretations with an explanation of why these were dismissed. Only those presumptions shared by important stakeholders should form the basis of the conclusions. Compliance with this standard allows potential users of the evaluation findings to assess whether they are justified. In addition, the credibility of the conclusions is enhanced.

A9 Impartial Reporting

Reporting is guarded against distortions by any stakeholder group so that the report fairly reflects the findings.

Many different perspectives characterize the environment in which an evaluation takes place. Stakeholders often hold divergent opinions about the evaluand. An evaluation runs the risk of being dominated or abused by a certain party to the evaluation. An evaluation should refrain from simply accepting one specific point of view. Rather, all relevant perspectives need to be fairly represented. Therefore, it should be guaranteed that the evaluation takes on an independent, objective position. For example, too close a relationship to clients and those responsible for the evaluand should be avoided. The relationship maintained between evaluator and client (as well as other relevant stakeholders) needs to be clarified at the onset of the evaluation process. The role clarification should also include an agreement concerning the right to publish the evaluation report.

A10 Metaevaluation

The evaluation itself is subject to evaluation using these and other important sets of standards so that its implementation is guided and stakeholders can assess the strengths and weaknesses of the evaluation upon its completion.

Ineffective evaluations can lead to wrong decisions. At the same time, evaluations can be subject to unwarranted criticism. To avoid these situations, the quality of an evaluation should be examined. A metaevaluation can use the set of standards introduced with this document to assess an evaluation. A metaevaluation can, depending on the specific situation, be designed summatively or formatively. It can be of internal or external nature. As with an evaluation, a metaevaluation can be more or less extensive. Whereas an in-depth, detailed metaevaluation is

only necessary in certain cases, a concise self-evaluation by the evaluation team is a must. The resources needed for the metaevaluation (usually modest) should be set aside in the planning phase of the evaluation.

ANNEXES/ADDITIONAL MATERIAL

Functional Table of the SEVAL Standards

The following table displays each standard according to its importance for certain steps in the evaluation process.

Deciding whether to evaluate

U1 Stakeholder Identification

U2 Evaluator Credibility

U7 Evaluation Impact

F2 Political Viability

F3 Cost Effectiveness

P1 Formal Agreement

P6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

A1 Program Documentation

A2 Context Analysis

A10 Metaevaluation

Defining the evaluation problem

U1 Stakeholder Identification

A1 Program Documentation

A2 Context Analysis

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

A10 Metaevaluation

Designing the evaluation

U1 Stakeholder Identification

U3 Information Scope and Selection

U4 Transparency of Assessment

F1 Practical Procedures

P1 Formal Agreement

P4 Complete and Fair Assessment

A1 Program Documentation

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

A4 Defensible Information Sources

A5 Valid and Reliable information

A7 Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

A8 Justified Conclusions

A9 Impartial Reporting

A10 Metaevaluation

Collecting information

U2 Evaluator Credibility

U3 Information Scope and Selection

U4 Transparency of Assessment

F1 Practical Procedures

F2 Political Viability

P1 Formal Agreement

P2 Protection of Individual Rights

P3 Human Interactions

P4 Complete and Fair Assessment

A1 Program Documentation

A2 Context Analysis

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

A4 Defensible Information Sources

A5 Valid and Reliable Information

A6 Systematic Review of Data

A10 Metaevaluation

Analyzing information

U4 Transparency of Assessment

F1 Practical Procedures

A1 Program Documentation

A2 Context Analysis

A7 Analysis of Qualitative and Quantitative Data

A8 Justified Conclusions

A10 Metaevaluation

Reporting the evaluation

U1 Stakeholder Identification

U3 Information Scope and Selection

U4 Transparency of Assessment

U5 Report Comprehensiveness and Clarity

U6 Report Timeliness

U7 Evaluation Impact

P2 Protection of Individual Rights

P4 Complete and Fair Assessment

P5 Disclosure of Findings

A1 Program Documentation

A2 Context Analysis

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

A4 Defensible Information Sources

A8 Justified Conclusions

A9 Impartial Reporting

A10 Metaevaluation

Budgeting the evaluation

U4 Information Scope and Selection

F3 Cost Effectiveness

P1 Formal Agreement

A1 Program Documentation

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

A10 Metaevaluation

Contracting the evaluation

U1 Stakeholder Identification

U2 Evaluator Credibility

U3 Information Scope and Selection

U6 Report Timeliness

F2 Political Viability

P1 Formal Agreement

P2 Protection of Individual Rights

P5 Disclosure of Findings

P6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

A1 Program Documentation

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

A10 Metaevaluation

Managing the evaluation

U1 Stakeholder Identification

U2 Evaluator Credibility

U6 Report Timeliness

F2 Political Viability

F3 Cost Effectiveness

P1 Formal Agreement

P2 Protection of Individual Rights

P3 Human Interactions

P6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

A3 Described Purposes and Procedures

A6 Systematic Review of Data

A10 Metaevaluation

Staffing the evaluation

U2 Evaluator Credibility

F2 Political Viability

P6 Declaration of Conflicts of Interest

A9 Impartial Reporting

A10 Metaevaluation

Elaborating on the Development of the SEVAL Standards

The SEVAL standards were derived from *The Program Evaluation Standards* of the Joint Committee on Standards for Educational Evaluation (1994), translated into German by Wolfgang Beywl and Thomas Widmer (Joint Committee, 1999). In a survey, the members of the evaluation standards working group of the Swiss Evaluation Society commented on the set of standards. Based on their comments, a working group committee carried out revisions. The working group again discussed the revised version. The current document is the product of these final discussions.

The following modifications were considered necessary: Generally, the term “program” (or “program evaluation”) was replaced by the term “evaluand” (or “evaluation”). This does not constitute a major modification since the term “program” is used in a broad sense in the American original. Furthermore, to simplify the language, the short definitions of the standards containing “should” were transformed to indicative sentences. In addition to these linguistic adaptations, the following changes were made:

Merging standards A5 and A6 as well as A8 and A9

Rephrasing standards U7, F1, F3, P3, P4, P6, P7, A2, A7, A10, and A12

Deletion of standards P1 and P8.

Following, each modification is explained in detail.

Merged standards

Standards A5 and A6 address two indicators of high quality work in the social sciences, validity and reliability. Because the assessment of each of them does not make much sense due to their interdependence (see Widmer, 1996, p. 296), the two standards were summarized under one. Since it is usually desirable for evaluations to base their conclusions on both qualitative and quantitative data, standards A8 and A9 were merged as well.

Rephrased standards

U7 Evaluation Impact: The language was simplified, but the contents were not modified.

F1 Practical Procedures: The language was simplified, but the contents were not modified.

F3 Cost Effectiveness: The standard was deprived of its demand for efficiency because it is inherent throughout the standards and therefore redundant.

P3 Protection of Individual Rights: The original title of this standard ("Rights of Human Subjects") does not adequately reflect its meaning. Its scope is not confined to "human rights."

P4 Human Interactions: The standard was rephrased because the statement "respect human dignity and worth" does not seem convincing due to its asymmetrical nature.

P6 Disclosure of Findings: The statement "along with pertinent limitations" was abandoned, because it is not clear which limitations are meant and because other standards already cover this aspect.

P7 Conflict of Interest: Since impediments caused by conflicts of interest cannot always be averted, the strong wording "does not compromise" was changed to the more moderate "harm as little as possible."

A2 Context Analysis: The language was simplified without modifying the content.

A7 Systematic Information: The statement that all errors should be corrected was removed, because this explicit hint seems unnecessary.

A10 Justified Conclusions: To underline the message of this standard, the call for "comprehensible" conclusions was added because it constitutes an important proposition for assessing the quality of the conclusions.

A12 Metaevaluation: This standard was slightly altered in two ways. Firstly, the technical terms "formative" and "summative" were removed to facilitate understanding. Secondly, the statement "closely examine" was substituted by "assess" to allow for metaevaluations even in small evaluation projects.

Deleted standards

P1 Service Orientation: Evaluations should be designed to assist organizations to address and effectively serve the needs of the full range of targeted participants.

Justification for the deletion: One of the principles of the standards is that they should be applicable to the broadest range of context (as they were defined in the introduction). Not all evaluands are connected to service organizations (e.g., evaluations in the private sector). Likewise, it seems not always appropriate to consider the needs of the whole range of target groups. There might be cases where it proves important to concentrate on one specific segment of the spectrum.

P8 Fiscal Responsibility: The evaluator's allocation and expenditure of resources should reflect sound accountability procedures and otherwise be prudent and ethically responsible, so that expenditures are accounted for and appropriate.

Justification for the deletion:

- The standard mixes different, if connected, demands (careful accountability procedures, ethically responsible allocation of resources, documentation of resource allocation, "otherwise [. . .] prudent" allocation and expenditure of resources, responsible and adequate expenditure of resources . . .).
- Standard F3 already covers the major point of this standard.
- After the signing of a contract, the relationship between evaluator and client is similar to any work relationship regulated by the contract. Much more significant would be the events taking place before the signing of the contract (subcontracting by public and private organizations). The client's interests would be represented more effectively as part of these agreements.
- Many contracts in the field of human services include an overall payment based on a list of expected outcomes. As soon as the contract is signed, the right to gain insight into the accountability procedures is void. From this point of view, the standard seems far from reality and naïve.
- The standard does not adhere to the principle of complementarity. Nowhere else in the standards are clients required to supply the funding necessary to conduct an "ethically responsible" evaluation with "responsible and adequate" resources.

NOTE: The original contains a conversion table which helps translate the standards in the German version of the Program Evaluation Standards into the SEVAL standards. This is not relevant for the American/International audience of this document and is therefore not included here.

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